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Attitudes towards tradition and their consequences — analyses in the scope of theory of upbringing and education, and the history of pedagogical and praxeological philosophy

Abstract: In this text, the authors describe and analyze basic principles underlying the approach to tradition. The authors also propose a differentiation within the number of models of perceiving and describing tradition with the objective of reaching an optimal definition, from ethical, social, as well as pedagogical perspectives. The background for the discussion on this topic shall be the narration of a local Silesian woman. A look at the subject's biography shows how the power of upbringing exerts a great influence through such narratives, thus making them the most significant factors in the discovery and creation of one's own identity.

Keywords: tradition, education, narration, identity

Introduction

In the following article, the authors attempt to describe and analyze the basic approaches to tradition, namely: the traditionalist approach, the anti-traditionalist attitude, and the approach based on the affirmation of three temporal components which lay the foundation of the basic factors forming tradition, that is the past, the present and the future. The key assumption here is that tradition forms the fundamental basis of the process responsible for the upbringing of future generations. Moreover, what is necessary is also a differentiation within

the number of models of perceiving and describing tradition with the objective of reaching an optimal definition, from ethical, social, as well as pedagogical perspectives. In addition, the authors formulated a number of practical recommendations, included hereinafter, that indicate the ways or methods in which we should facilitate the legacy of our predecessors, while at the same time continuing to come up with novel solutions, coming from both the world of culture as well as modern civilization.

Each of the approaches described herein may result in the creation of particular negative phenomena, which might influence either the individual or the social group as a whole, thus the authors strongly recommend a careful approach in the implementation of the legacy of previous ages. Simultaneously, the authors would like to warn against an extremist rejection of the past, or on the other hand, neglecting the future. The fair evaluation of the achievements of past ages and contemporary generations allows us to form both an objective outlook on the possibilities of our input into social development as well as the well-being of future generations. That kind of balanced approach seems to be necessary, especially in the context of drastic technological development, because more and more often we come across the situations in which the modern human is misguided and persuaded to dedicate his or her respect solely to that which is contemporary. Technological progress, in order not to be deemed as socially destructive, must guarantee both a dynamic development of humanist values and, at the same time, proving to be sensitive to the good of the individual as well as dedicating care for the future wellbeing of humankind.

The illustrative section of the text has provoked the authors to facilitate the philosophy proposed by Charles Taylor (Taylor, 2001, pp. 380—381) in relation to tradition; for the philosopher perceives tradition as a type of generational message based on the relations between ideas and practices. This relation tends to be strengthened through the implementation of practical, everyday activities, whereas the source of the changes of this message most often lies in new ideas (Taylor, 2001, p. 382): the ideas and values which are rooted in these messages fall into a type of characteristic, generation-based, regional picture. The intention of the authors has been to draw attention to this message, which has been passed from generation to generation through verbal narration, stressing the fact that the recipient of these tales is, by definition, a member of the younger generation. Thus, we come to the conclusion that the meaning and impact of regional folk tales, ethnically-based, is a key element in the process of education and upbringing. The background for the discussion on this topic shall be the narration of a local Silesian woman (a Pole from the vicinity of the city of Tarnowskie Góry), which, in turn, will incorporate itself into the cultural legacy of the tradition of the region of Silesia. There is no doubt that similar local narrations have enriched everyone's lives, even the smallest of local social groups, even individual families. A look at the subject's biography shows how the power of upbringing

exerts an incredible influence through such narratives, making them the most significant factor in the discovery and creation of one's own identity.

Traditionalism as a basis for apotheosis of the past

The term traditionalism (derived from the Latin *traditio*, meaning, among others, 'a message') was first used to describe a French philosophical and social trend which was developed within the enclaves of European conservative theory at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries. Its main representatives were, amongst others, Louis de Bonald and Joseph de Maistre. Preceding the Revolution of 1789, the traditionalist movement heralded ideas and values of conservative political and religious behavior (*conserver*) which they saw as being endangered by the newly-emerging, enlightened rationalism. Conservatism, as well as the said times, were perceived as the age of an intellectual movement which guarded society from the invasion of revolutionary ideas and attitudes. One aspect, which was common to all forms of conservatism, was an apologetic approach to the past, which resulted in negative ridicule of any attempts to create a new social order.

The conservatives, generally, did not hold a steadfast view on the approach that everything which is derived from the past — tradition¹ — is sacred and holy. However, even this type of sanctification of tradition was not in itself a rare event. The typical rationale proposed by the conservatives was based on the preconception that any social or economic organization or formation had to have lasted long enough to have been deemed as possessing certain merits and advantages, which must in turn possess relatively positive traits and that there is no need in destroying the efforts of our predecessors. Conservatives believed that the highly insensible and spontaneous surrender to the activities of enthusiasts of new solutions brought about by the passage of time, especially those connected with social and political ideas, such as the madness which they deemed to be the obliteration of the tried and tested traditions, solely based on intuitive and inexperienced novices or individual agitators, bored with its positively dangerous ideas and presumptions. The conservatives were certain that there is no need to believe in the idea that the individual or small group of individuals is to be wiser than the rest of society, which would be composed of supporters of a social status quo. Fierce defenders of tradition did not stop

¹ Tradition is defined as a collection of practiced behaviors with the objective of cultivating and teaching of certain norms and values, which is intended to ensure a steadfast connection with the past; these practices are usually connected with commonly approved symbolic behaviors, for example rituals, rites, customs, habits (Marshall, 2008, p. 403).

there, by merely proclaiming their ideas that tradition deserves trust and faith. In fact, they attempted to prove that innovations are only an illusion, as they must always be based on formulas which have already been discovered, activities already undertaken, or simply usurpations (Szacki, 2011, pp. 47—48).

The key argument brought up in discussions with their adversaries was the indication of the idea of continuity of generations, which adhered to common values and reminded society of the basics and principles of behavior stemming from the belief that no generation may treat society as if it were the proverbial *terra nova* (or at least land which they would deem as newly-formed). It is then true that in every society there is a necessity to be rooted in tradition, in which it finds a direction of behavioral patterns in the form of social and moral norms. The depiction of tradition as not only an area which is abundant in social ideas, cultural and educational norms, but also something of a foundation in the building of national identity, forms an undeniable basis of that which had been achieved by the conservatives.

Perceiving the achievements of our ancestors as valuable wisdom, the conservatives endowed their work and their efforts with honour. This was very often linked with idealization of the past: for instance the glorification of historical events and the achievements of great people of bygone ages. A true treasure trove of wisdom was only formed, in their opinion, by laws and tradition which had long been created — ethical codes, technical and scientific achievements, cultural works which would have to be cherished and secured at all cost. Respect, fealty and loyalty, as well as gratitude, form the most significant values for human existence — and all incorporate themselves in the idea of tradition. A compulsive loyalty to tradition in the case of extremely orthodox leaders may have, however, had a psychopathic background — an overwhelming feeling of danger and a panic-based approach to the new (xenophobia). Individuals bearing traits of dogmatic personalities could be prone to such schematics in their reactions to even the slightest of change. Any novelties whatsoever should thus be labelled as “nothing more than a passing phase” through the prism of the past, meaning that any proposals of the modification of social life ought to be based on the wisdom and position of those perceived as great intellectual predecessors — an idea in itself rather absurd, considering the dynamics and extreme character of revolutionary changes.

An individual proclaiming affirmation of conservative tradition and wishing to strengthen their social position would devise a terminology based upon public opinion, for example “the wisdom of the ages,” “the experience of my forefathers,” “a tradition passed on from father to son for generations,” “institutions sanctified by the passage of time,” and so on.

Individuals rebelling against the existing order were referred to as utopian troublemakers; people who merely induce problems. The conservatives, on the other hand, used the tradition as a means of persuasion. The imperative to

“start from scratch” was interpreted as “nothing new,” that is simply a means of refreshing or reordering tradition. This type of rhetoric supported the argumentation for the necessity of a non-revolutionary improvement of social life.

In order to generalize these analyses, it seems useful to classify the number of intellectual and emotional approaches towards the past, or rather the number of models of perceiving tradition:

1. Tradition as the sacred.
2. Tradition as a reservoir of wisdom.
3. Tradition as a synonym of experience.
4. Tradition as the manifestation of collective consciousness.
5. Tradition as a means of learning about ancestry and discovering one's true genealogy.
6. Tradition as the source of building blocks for individual and group identity, serving as the basis of defining oneself.
7. Tradition as a collection of general human values (especially respect, fidelity, loyalty, and gratitude).
8. Tradition as the basis of modern social heritage.
9. Tradition as a source of acquiring social ideals, moral norms, and role-models for behavior.
10. Tradition seen as a tried and tested system of upbringing and educational methods — and the socialization of subsequent generations.
11. Tradition as a point of resistance against revolutionary social changes.
12. Tradition as a method of ensuring the continuity of history throughout the ages, means of emphasizing the process of the existence of society over the passage of time.
13. Tradition as a link between generations and a manifestation of solidarity between them.
14. Tradition as an obligation to safeguard that which has been achieved (especially cultural heritage), as well as an obligation to transmit or communicate this throughout society.

Anti-traditionalism as a negation of the world we see

Individuals introducing reforms would establish new relations between the present and the future with the past, demanding the freeing of the past and the unanimous support for the idea of being “against” tradition. Practically every age or epoch has been abundant in those who would see the past as “the kingdom of superstition,” backwardness, and social or political stagnation. Achievements of the bygone generations were seen as uninspiring for modernity and

counter-revolutionary per se. This lack of reflection lead those individuals into the trap of simplification, based on describing the past as a burden which limits the freedom and creativity of the younger generation.

Attempting to combat the so-called “old social order,” they aimed at persuading society that which had been considered aged (distantly situated in time) could neither serve as a sufficient indicator of values or play the part of a lawful, institutional judge, nor could it be the only rationale for undertaking current decisions. The invocation of the views represented by individuals perceived as people of authority from past ages was, in the opinion of radicals, synonymous with giving up the individual and independent activity by modern humans as such. Emulating one’s ancestors and a passive reconstruction of their achievements was a substitute for self-reflection and supplanted the need for the reform of structures and social relations. A negation of the world as perceived by these individuals was thus linked with a lack of acknowledgement of the efforts made by their predecessors, the minimisation of their achievements and deeds and a peculiar type of megalomania, stemming from a lack of experience, insufficient knowledge of historical issues, as well as those connected with the economic situation of a given society, and a lack of understanding of biologically predestined mental capacity, resulting from the limits of human existence.

Tradition was only used in order to pinpoint the anti-values and negative role models. A hypercritical approach to models of social life belonging to the past was also accompanied by group enthusiasm connected with the introduction of new social and political solutions and legal regulations. However, the utopian character of the proposals made by these radicals was often met with social distrust directed towards the ideas which were deemed too abstract and perceived as idealistic desiderates.

Radicals had barricaded themselves against the idea that modernity could also bring about a destructive change (Bauman, 2013), possibly generating a number of consequential social problems. Dehumanization, however, may also affect the past, the same way it affects the processes occurring in the present. In order to generalize the position of anti-traditionalists, it seems worthwhile to classify some of their characteristic traits:

1. Clear distancing from any emotional relations with the past.
2. Contempt towards everything which belongs to the past, the things that might have been the endeavour of previous generation, disregard for the social heritage as a thing of little value, outdated and, as such, deemed useless in modern human society.
3. Delusional longing for the beginning of something different, for “starting anew”; the contemporary scholars and scientists point to the fact that neither is it possible to introduce total innovation, nor is it achievable to live according in total harmony with the past, as social progress occurs through the in-depth analysis of historical events, combined with meticulous planning of the future.

4. Competitive approach to the achievements of ancestors, often resulting in escalation of group hatred in the form of an effective rebellion, for example the outbreak of revolution, war, riots provoked by social groups (which perceive themselves as being somehow victimized) as well as a number of other situations related with social unrest.

An approach based on the affirmation of the past, present, and the future — the optimal outlook on the process of upbringing with relation to tradition

The basis for the affirmation of the three temporal categories is linked with the perception of the past, the present, and the future as forces which hold within themselves the ability to create values. The essence of this position can be found in the following statement: we must remain faithful to tradition, while at the same time keeping in pace with the present. Cultural heritage forms a type of foundation of that which is tangible as well of the intangible, from which present society can benefit. However, society's role is to ensure the support for ideas of solidarity with its ancestors and upholding an emotional relation with its successors. Tradition is not a cultural resource which makes way for the present; it rather serves as an inspiration for a constructive discourse and is a means of communication between generations. According to this opinion, tradition is defined as a collection of all relations between the present (current generations) and the past (previous generations). Tradition is sometimes also seen as a social fact that demands acknowledgement regardless of the public opinion. However, tradition does not represent the sacred sphere or an object of cult; it is rather an area of meaningful context, both for individuals as well as whole societies.

Remaining conscious of the fact that it is possible to enumerate multiple examples of both positive as well as negative examples of tradition, the affirmation-based approach is naturally characterized by the selective attitude to tradition, that is, a kind of selectiveness based on the common sense. According to it, it is recommended to facilitate those solutions deemed as rational, those which humanize modern quality of life, and those which are prone to social inclusion. Space for tradition is not synonymous with a necessity to slavishly copy our predecessors. It is accepted that cultural heritage may be verified, especially its spheres connected with science and observing customs. A modern modification, updating or reinterpretation of the achievements of the past generations quite often tends to be a necessity.

Collaboration between the past, the present, and the future is based, among others, on the fact that the past may be subject to limitation through present achievements, in which modern society may find the basis for its existence, formed through the access to information gained from the past, and thus recover the sense of meaningfulness of life. The efforts of people from the past ages increase in value owing to the work of their modern continuators, whereas successors have the possibility of strengthening their reputation and authority with the help of famous ancestors.

Adjusting tradition, in the opinion of pedagogues who affirm the past, the present, and the future reflectively, has a lot on offer for humanity, among others:

1. It satisfies the need for love and affection, safety and security, affiliation, a sense of belonging (especially when analyzing the emotional bonds with those closest to us, for example our grandparents or great-grandparents).
2. It provides theoretical as well as practical knowledge, granting people the possibility and ability of rational behavior and lifestyle which is led in both a proper and satisfactory way.
3. It provides us with material to modeling our lives on and for the identification with others, mainly by providing ethical and intellectual role models.
4. It allows to achieve an appropriate level of emotional, social, and axiological maturity (as famously said by Cicero, "Not to know what happened before you were born is to be a child forever").
5. It enriches societies through the introduction of a number of basic methods of communication between generations: the conversation/restoration principle (securing that which has been acquired), the principle of transmission (transmitting the results of past efforts to our successors), the principle of improvement (tradition facilitated as a tool for social change), the principle of continuity (nurturing the link between generations).
6. It can provide a form of sanctuary from failures or catastrophes experienced by members of society or by members of a given social group.
7. It may be used as a weapon in the struggle against, for example, social injustice, by way of searching for past values which can be juxtaposed against the modern world.
8. It teaches us to anticipate and also to protect material and spiritual achievements against a variety of hazards and local or global dangers.
9. It provides assistance in an in-depth diagnosis of modernity through the comparison of the achievements of representatives from a variety of historical periods.

Despite the fact that every new generation finds its own elements of past generations within itself, for example in social norms, collective values, ethical codes, the basis of certain customs, religions, judicial laws; in itself it is defined by none of the above, being in itself a new social and cultural quality. Due to

this fact, the conflict usually arising from applying unilateral pressure on either being for or against the tradition, which is pedagogically groundless.

Regional folk tales as a way of discovering one's own identity

The first part of our article was concluded with the opinion that the inclusion of tradition in the process of education and upbringing is of the utmost importance. After all, our relation with tradition may provide a way to engage our own creative selves, in other words — it can provide us with a way of improving our own selves. To receive the answer to the question “who am I?” it is essential to first answer the questions of where I come from and what heritage I have received, as well as defining values which have contributed to shaping my fellow compatriots, my neighbors and my parents. Even in the event that we should wish to negate any part of our generation or our heritage, the priority is to first gain knowledge as to the quality of this element. A method which may assist us in this endeavour may simply lie in listening to the narrations of the older generation.

The word narration originates in Latin *narratio* which can be translated as ‘a story’ or ‘a tale’ (Sobol, 1993, p. 586). The narrations which we consider the most valuable are those stories which have been passed orally (see Lalak, 2010, pp. 60—63). Oral history is a kind of mirror of the past (ideas, understanding the context of events), which is perpetuated in spoken form. All history provides us with values which underlie behaviors attributed to historical heroes, or at least it may seem so from the narrator’s point of view. The meaning of human history itself (in an attempt to give such written stories or passages a certain scientific value) is apparent to Alan Nevins, when he analyzes the life of Stephen Grover Cleveland. He came to the understanding that it was not formal competence that guaranteed Cleveland’s success as the President of the United States, but rather internalized values such as honesty, courage, and independence (Lalak, 2010, p. 60). These made him independent in a certain way and gave him traits which are characteristic of a very individual approach to behavior.

Oral histories undoubtedly build the identity of ethnic, social, and regional groups. People begin to understand themselves and to a large extent — their own language. As Błażej Baszczak observes, adhering to the aforementioned views expressed by Taylor: “[...] The construction of human identity is not accomplished outside designated cultural circle, from which the individual comes, as it is this cycle which attributes certain definitive frameworks to an individual. These may take the form of interpretational clarifications for understanding

your own self. In addition to this, language in itself is such a flexible medium that it allows for a variety of changes and interpretations in the course of the narration. Owing to self-interpretation, we can actually conduct this type of self-alteration through language — this could be the phenomenon of overvaluing something, attributing new meaning to a number of issues related to the story of our life — in this way we are able to change ourselves and participate in creation” (Baszczak, 2011, p. 138).

Taylor’s reflections lead us to believe that oral, local histories contain precious material for inner development and for the process of growing up. Local tales take place in the young person’s immediate environment — however, not in their present timeframe (seeing as they refer to the past) but in their own well-known space. This common space, with its abundance of experience, can actually be responsible for the activating of certain basic educational mechanisms, described by Maria Grzywak-Kaczyńska:

1. copycat behavior, when we learn from others (consciously or unconsciously) how to behave, think and feel;
2. identification, when we take ideas and life goals from others;
3. suggestions, when we adhere to other people’s views;
4. syntonik harmony, in which case we inherit emotional states from others, for example anxiety, anger, compassion, happiness, sadness, enthusiasm (Grzywak-Kaczyńska, 1988, pp. 25—32).

The aforementioned mechanisms indicate the way to achieve passive acceptance of traditional views, objectives, or feelings. However, in the proposed narrative work model, these mechanisms should be treated as a whole, and initiate growth. This way every individual, in the course of developing his or her own self, should actively relate or react to these developmental incentives. Active participation does not, however, rule out ideas which have been handed down from generation to generation, but suggests their verification in one’s own inner self. Such creative verification is a way to develop a person’s own identity (Grzywak-Kaczyńska, 1988, pp. 34—35).

Knowledge handed down from generation to generation and its role in regional education and upbringing — presented on the example of local Silesian narratives

An example of the advantages which have been described above, connected with psychological and educational issues, is a collection of fragmentary nar-

rations or stories told by a Silesian woman living in the vicinity of the city of Tarnowskie Góry.² The stories which she has been telling her children and grandchildren have a great potential to build the listeners' identity, rooted (or at least apparent) in local folklore. The stories have been written down in Silesian dialect³ (despite the fact that it has a number of phonetic versions, sometimes even depending on an individual family). These following written record quite loosely adheres to the true story — being more of a description or a number of its versions. The stories are set in the biography of the Silesian woman who was a subject of our research. They are, however, quite loosely based on authentic events. The most significant factor is that they all convey the same message or idea. Now, let us discuss the said message.

First of all, it is obvious that the principles which are respected in the narratives have a source in the storyteller's religious beliefs. It can therefore be concluded that, in her opinion, a person's religiousness plays a decisive role in terms of a person's morality. In her view, cultivated traditions (customs, habits) are, to a large extent, linked with religiousness.

Example 1

On Christmas

The original version in the local dialect

Tyn Adwynt już nic z cekania niy mo. Ludzie by ciyngiem uciechy chcieli. Mi zaś się widzi, że trza umieć dockać do łostatniej chwili. Dopiyro w Wilija wstać, choinka postroić, siymiyniotka nawarzyć, makówki zrobić, to wszystko ło godzie. [...] Potym jeszcze stoł urychtować, wyszkrobiony serwet łościongnać, noczynie połoskładać. [...] I downij każdy taki gód miol, co przy wiecerzy wiela niy godoł. Żodyn tyż niy biadoł, że siymiyniotka za gorzko, a kompot cornymi fuzeklamami śmierdzi. Potym my się kole choinki posiadali, kolendy śpiywali na dwa gosity, dalyj maszkycyli i tak do pastyrki. Wybiryali my się kole jedynostyj,

² As a part of her cooperation with the Department of Culture of the Local Municipality of the city of Tarnowskie Góry (Polish: Wydział Kultury Starostwa Powiatowego w Tarnowskich Górach) in 2001, Beata Ecler-Nocoń took part in a competition organized by the Polish-German Cooperative Center (Polish: Dom Współpracy Polsko-Niemieckiej) entitled "Local History Based on the Example of Chosen Municipalities, Cities and Townships." The objective of the project was to show the inhabitants of the region of Upper Silesia the social and cultural potential of the region's history. The project described herein was financed from the budget of the Federal Republic of Germany. A fragment produced by one of the authors (February 2002) includes explorations conducted on the topic of "The Respect for Work — an Element of Upbringing in a Silesian Family." The objective of the research was the depiction of the specific educational forces acting within a Silesian family — this objective was to be reached through a case study.

³ As the Silesian dialect has no uniform written form, the transcript merely mirrors the sound of the words by using the Polish diacritics.

bo do kościoła my mieli kawoł drogi. Koždy w nojlepszym mantlu, ciepłych strzewikach. Szlli my przez las, śniyg skrzypioł.

Translations into Polish and English

„Dzisiejszy Advent już nic w sobie z czekania nie ma. Ludzie ciągle chcieliby uciechy. Ja zaś uważam, że trzeba umieć wyczekać do ostatniej chwili. Dopiero w Wigilię wstać, choinkę udekorować, ugotować siemieniotkę, zrobić makówki, a to wszystko bez posiłku. [...] Potem jeszcze nakryć stół wykrochmalonym obrusem, porozkładać naczynia. [...] Dawniej to każdy był taki głodny, że przy kolacji wiele nie mówił. Żaden też nie narzekał, że siemieniotka za gorzka, a kompot brudnymi skarpetami pachnie. Potem do samej pasterki siedzieliśmy koło choinki, śpiewaliśmy kolędy na dwa głosy i jedli smakołyki. Na pasterkę szliśmy około godziny jedenastej, bo do kościoła mieliśmy daleko. Każdy w najlepszym płaszczu i ciepłych butach. Szliśmy przez las a śnieg skrzypiał.”

“Nowadays the Advent has lost its entire atmosphere of waiting. Everyone just wants to have fun. On the other hand, I believe that you have to be able to wait till the last moment. It is only on Christmas Eve that we should get up, decorate the Christmas tree, prepare the traditional meal — and all of this on an empty stomach. After this we should lay the table with a clean, crisp tablecloth and shiny plates. It used to be that everybody was so hungry that during the dinner itself nobody really talked too much. Nobody complained either that the soup or the meal was too bitter and that the dessert smelled a bit off. After that, we would sit by the Christmas tree till midnight mass, singing Christmas carols as a duo and eating sweets. The trip to take part in midnight mass actually started around 11.00 as we lived quite far away from the church. Everybody had their best coats on, and was wearing warm shoes. We would walk through the forest and the snow would crunch under our feet.”

Example 2

On Fat Thursday (Polish *Thusty Czwartek*, a traditional Christian feast marking the last Thursday before Lent, associated with the celebration of Carnival.)

The original version in the local dialect

W tusty czwortek, modo cy staro, kożdo krepli upiykła. Juzaś tak drogo to niy wychodziło. [...]. A i koždy w doma kury chowoł, to roz dwa te pora jajec uszporowo. Terozki to tym babom się nic niy chce.

Translations into Polish and English

„W Tłusty Czwartek młoda czy stara, każda upiekła pączki. Pieczenie nie było takie drogie. [...] A w każdym domu hodowało się kury, to kilka jajek było uskładanych. Teraz to kobietom nic się nie chce.”

“On Fat Thursday every woman, young or old, used to make traditional doughnuts. The baking itself wasn’t even that expensive. [...] And in every house they used to keep chickens, so everybody had a few eggs stacked up. Nowadays women can’t be bothered to do anything.”

Secondly, according to the opinion of the Silesian woman who was subject of this research, life is composed of such values as hard work, responsibility, and honesty. It is probable that attitude is rooted in many years of experience of family life. She speaks of her husband who had to be responsible and hard-working in order to support his family and to care for all their needs. Such traits gave hope for survival in difficult circumstances.

Example 3

On choosing a husband

The original version in the local dialect

Możno terazki byś padła, co ze Karlikiem, twoim dziadkiem, to niy była żodno wielko romantyczno miłość. Miałach swoje lata, wydać się musiałach. Niy myśl se jednak, że Karlik to był pierwszy, co mi się nadarzoł. [...] Wybrałach Karlika. Synek z porzodnyj rodziny, niy piół, do roboty chodzioł, geltag miół niy najgorszy, szykowny tyż boł, a jak już co pedzioł, to my się wszyscy uśmioli. [...] I widać, żech źle niy trefioła, bo na bezrok bydzie sześćdziesiąt lot po naszym ślubie.

Translations into Polish and English

„Może teraz byś powiedziała, że z Karolem, twoim dziadkiem, to nie była żadna wielka, romantyczna miłość. Miałam sporo lat, musiałam wyjść za mąż. Nie myśl jednak, że Karol to był pierwszy, jaki mi się trafił. Wybrałam Karola. Chłopak z porządnej rodziny, nie pił, chodził do pracy, zarabiał sporo pieniędzy, był także przystojny, a jak już coś powiedział, to wszystkich rozbawił. Widać także, że mąż mi się udał, bo w przyszłym roku będzie sześćdziesiąt lat po naszym ślubie.”

“Well, perhaps nowadays you might say that Karol, your grandfather that is, and me, didn’t really have what you would call romantic love. I was getting on a bit I had to get married. But don’t you think for one minute that Karol

was the first one that came along! It was Me who chose him. The boy came from a good family, didn't drink, went to work, made quite a lot of money, he was also good-looking, and when he said something, everyone used to laugh. I suppose you can also say that looking at my husband now he was a good match because next year it will be our 60th wedding anniversary."

Thirdly, the narrator promotes such values as helpfulness and support given to others. It is such values, respected within a social group, that allow every member of the group to overcome unforeseen difficulties and misfortune.

Example 4

A story of an explosion in a factory

The original version in the local dialect

A przeco mom w pamiynci casy, jak jednym szło ło drugich. Na tyn przykład jak wybuchła prochownia. To było jakoś przed Bożym Narodzynim. Już my się po leku do świont rychtowali. Matka warzoła syrop z maślanki na pierniki. Jo się przyglondala tyj robocie. Naroz Hanikowi zachciało się iść do wychodka. Z sniego był ftedy taki mały ślimok a wychodek mieli my na dworze. [...] Ledwo sebloklach mu galotki, jak coś gruchło. [...] Wzionach Hanika na rynce i leca. W doma szyby popynkane. Ftoś rycół: wybuch na prochowni. Matka biolo jak śmierotka, w samyj zopasce stoła na schodach. Hanik dar się w niebogłosy. Potym my się dowiedzieli najgorszego: dwóch chopów zabiło, jedna baba. Niy żodnych cudzych, naszych ze wsi. Przed samymi świyntoma ich chowali. [...] Cało wieś żalowała tych niyboszczyków. Nikomu się niy przelywało, ale każdy patrzył coś dać ich familyji, żeby jakieś świynta mieli.

Translations into Polish and English

„A przecież mam w pamięci czasy, jak jeden zabiegał o drugiego. Na przykład, kiedy wybuchła fabryka prochu. To było jakoś przed Bożym Narodzeniem. Przygotowywaliśmy się do świąt. Matka gotowała syrop z maślanki na pierniki. Ja się przyglądałam jej pracy. Nagle Henryk chciał iść do toalety. Z niego był wówczas taki mały ślimak, a toaletę mieliśmy na podwórku. [...] Ledwie rozebrałam mu spodenki, jak coś uderzyło. [...] Wzięłam Henryka na ręce i poleciałam. W domu szyby popękane. Ktoś krzyczał: *wybuch w fabryce prochu*. Mama była biała jak śmierć, w samym fartuchu stała na schodach. Henryk krzyczał w niebogłosy. Potem dowiedziałam się najgorszego: dwóch mężczyzn zabiło i jedną kobietę. Nie żadnych obcych, ale z naszej wsi. Pogrzeb był przed samymi świętami. [...] Cała wieś żalowała zmarłych. Nikomu się nie przelewało, ale każdy starał się coś podarować ich rodzinom, aby wyprawili jakieś święta.”

“But of course I remember times when everybody looked after one another. For example when the powder factory exploded. It was around Christmas. We were getting ready for the holiday season. My mother was cooking buttermilk syrup to make gingerbread. I was looking on while she worked. Suddenly Henryk wanted to go to the toilet. He was such a little tyke and the toilet was outside. [...] As soon as I pulled down his shorts, something blew up. [...] I took him in my arms and ran for it. At home, all the windows were broken and the glass shattered. Somebody was shouting: *explosion in the powder factory*. My mother was as white as a sheet, in her cooking apron, standing there on the stairs. Henryk was shouting and crying like mad. Later, I found out the worst: two men had been killed, and one woman. Not some strangers mind you, but people from our village. The funeral was just before Christmas. [...] The whole village mourned the dead. Nobody had a lot of money those days but everybody tried to give them something so that their families could somehow get through it all and celebrate Christmas.”

Fourthly, the narrator clearly cultivates an authoritarian upbringing.

Example 5

A priest's home visit (traditional in Roman Catholic Polish families during the Christmas period and recognized as an important family event)

The original version in the local dialect

Kolynda to była ważno wizyta. Farorz w doma. Teroz to się wiela z tego niy robią. [...] Piyrwyj to było niy do pomyślnio. [...] W świynta się wiela niy kromioło, ale ksiądz to boł ksiądz. Lod nowa pucowało się łokna. Pastowało izby. Wyblyszczyło kłomki. Matka rychtowała tyż zogówek, żeby farorz miał na cym klęceć. Jak już było wszystko gotowe, to my przynosili micha i się myli. Kożdy nojlepsze łachy łoblykoł i się zacynało cekanie.

Translations into Polish and English

„Kolęda to była ważna wizyta. Ksiądz w domu. Teraz to nikt do kolędy nie przywiązuje wagi. [...] Kiedyś to było nie do pomyślenia. [...] Choć w święta się nie bałaganiło, to ksiądz to był ksiądz. Od nowa myło się okna. Pastowało pokoje. Czyściło kłamki. Matka szykowała poduszkę, żeby ksiądz miał na czym klęczeć. Jak już wszystko było gotowe, to przynosiliśmy miskę i myliśmy się. Każdy też ubierał najlepsze ubranie i zaczynało się czekanie.”

“The priest's Christmas visit was a very important occasion. The priest in our house! Nowadays nobody really cares about these visits. [...] Those days, it would be unthinkable. [...] Despite the fact that nobody ever made a mess dur-

ing Christmas, a priest was a priest after all. The windows were washed again and the rooms cleaned — even the doorknobs were polished. Mother prepared a special cushion so the priest could kneel comfortably. When everything was ready, we used to bring in a bowl and take a bath. Everybody put on their best clothes and waiting would start.”

Fifthly and finally, the author of the narratives emphasizes the strength of the human character manifested in not giving up in difficult circumstances, which was probably connected with a complex social and economic situation.

The original version in the local dialect

Ludzie twardzi byli, niy to, co teraz.

Translations into Polish and English

„Ludzie byli twardzi, nie to, co teraz.”

“People used to be tough, not like today.”

Conclusions

From the narratives analyzed in the second part of the article, it seems that such values as work and religiousness were seen as priorities. In literature, these are very often associated with the role of region in Silesia (see Swadźba, 2012). This fact revolves around a very characteristic regional feel. The narratives also show that the values mentioned above are interconnected to a large extent with the cultivation of traditions. If the case be that such relations possess a very familiar character — that is, they are told by important or respected members of the community, they undoubtedly form an atmosphere which supports the formation of internal values and promotes the discovery of one’s own identity. This will come to pass if the following two stages of the educational and upbringing process are put into practice: listening (this is the time when the identification, harmony and the ideas and suggestions which are given by the narrator shall take place), and secondly (a conscious, deliberate, intentional acceptance of attitudes and values or, alternatively, intentional negation of these values, not based on chance). For example, it would be advisable for communication between generations in Silesian families to be based on such values as proper hard work, responsibility or an altruistic instinct to help others. Perhaps it is still necessary to verify the definition and understanding of authority, as one that does not necessarily have to be indivisibly linked with an official authorita-

tive function. Thus, a creative approach to tradition still finds strong bases in pedagogical and praxeological philosophy.

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